REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 7, 12, 14, 16-27 have been amended. Claims 1-8, 10-12, 14 and 16-27 are pending and under consideration. No new matter has been added.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

In item 3 on page 3, claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-12, 14 and 16-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hsu et al. (U.S. 6,134,340). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Generally, Hsu et al. describes an identification verification process using a digital image of an entire fingerprint. After capturing an entire fingerprint, reference patch locations are then extracted from the created digital image (see column 2, lines 14-39 and Figs. 3, 5 and 6 showing an entire image of a fingerprint is captured). For example, column 2, line 17 of Hsu et al. describes "generating a digital image of a fingerprint." Hsu et al. does not describe "successively sampling partial images" (e.g., claim 1, line 6). In a non-limiting example of a possible embodiment of the present invention, one such sampling of successive partial images could be a fingerprint image captured from a fingerprint "sweep" (see application, page 6, line 25 to page 7, line 3).

In contrast, in Hsu et al. the image of the fingerprint (e.g., Figure 3) is captured as a whole image. Hsu et al. then utilizes "reference patches" based on the *entire* fingerprint image (see Hsu et al., column 2, lines 13-39). Therefore, Hsu et al. fails to describe "a sampling section for successively sampling partial images of a portion of an organism" as recited by lines 6-7 of claim 1.

In addition, page 3, lines 1-5 of the Office Action referred to item 54 in Figure 2; column 2, lines 16-20; and column 9, lines 27-60 of Hsu et al. as disclosing a "feature detection" unit which allegedly discloses the "detection section" of claim 1. Item 54 in Fig. 2 of Hsu et al. contains the legend "REFERENCE PATCH CORRELATION" and column 9, lines 42-55 of Hsu et al. states:

> The thinned images of the ridges and valleys are used in **feature detection**...
> The identified features are analyzed in a local feature density analysis step,
> shown in block 48, which provides sufficient data for **reference patch position
> selection**... The selected reference patches are extracted from the entire
> fingerprint image, as indicated in block 52, and stored for later use in the
> verification process... Similarly, the **reference patch two-dimensional positions**
> are also stored for later use in the geometric constraint checking process

(emphasis added).

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As indicated by the preceding quotation, the "reference patches" described in Hsu et al. (see column 7, lines 41-51 and the outlined boxes in Fig. 3) are not equivalent to "a relative positional relationship between the sampled partial image and the previously sampled partial image based on the overlapping portion" as recited on lines 11-13 of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited art for at least the above mentioned reasons.

Independent claims 20 and 21 also recite the features discussed above with respect to claim 1, and therefore, patentably distinguish over the cited art.

Independent claim 22 recites "sampling successive partial images of a portion of an organism" (lines 5-6) and "detecting... a relative positional relationship between the sampled partial image and the previously sampled partial image based on the overlapping portion" (lines 9-12), and therefore, patentably distinguishes over the cited art.

Independent claims 24 and 26 recite "detecting successive partial images... [and] a relative positional relationship between the sampled partial image and the previously sampled partial image based on the overlapping portion," and therefore, patentably distinguish over the cited art.

The dependent claims inherit the patentable recitations of their base claim, and therefore, patentably distinguish over the cited art for at least the reasons discussed with respect to their respective base claims. Therefore, applicants request the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

In Item 5 of the Office Action, claims 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Hsu et al. in view of Morita et al. (US 4,827,527) for the same reasons as set forth in the last Office Action. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants submit that Morita et al. fails to cure the deficiencies of Hsu et al. described above. Accordingly, dependent claims 5 and 6 inherit the patentable recitations of their respective base claims, and therefore, patentably distinguish over the cited art for at least the above-mentioned reasons. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection be withdrawn.

Summary

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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